

GUELPH YOUTH COUNCIL (GYC) TERMS OF REFERENCE

To find general information about the Guelph Youth Council, past projects and events, GYC meetings and application information, visit: <https://youth.guelph.ca>

Profile

The Guelph Youth Council (GYC) is a group of local youth, aged 13 - 18, who are committed to preserving and enhancing youth culture in the Guelph community. The GYC plays an active role in ensuring that the collective voice of the local youth population is heard and represented. This is achieved by:

- Regularly planning and implementing special events and activities.
- Liaising with the City Council and other key decision-makers within the community.
- Networking with various youth-based organizations and agencies.
- Raising awareness of the positive contributions that youth are making to our community.
- Engaging in positive and constructive social activism.
- Volunteering at various community-based events and activities.

Description

The Guelph Youth Council meets every Wednesday from 4:30 - 5:30 pm at The Evergreen Seniors Centre (683 Woolwich St, Guelph, ON N1H 3Y8) from late September and until the end of June. The group does not meet on holidays. Depending on the project workload, the Youth Services Coordinator may call additional meetings throughout the year.

Mandate

The GYC will be responsive to all youth within the community and will be committed to serving city-wide youth needs and interests. The GYC will empower the youth population in Guelph by providing youth with an opportunity to lead, achieve, and play within our community.

Values

- We believe that youth are an integral part of Guelph and have inherent rights and responsibilities.
- We believe that youth can make positive contributions to the community.
- We believe that an investment in young people is an investment in the present and the future.

- We believe that there is strength in diversity.
- We believe that all youth bring with them a unique and important viewpoint.
- We believe that youth should be encouraged and given the opportunity to take a leading role in issues that affect their lives and that youth should be consulted whenever decisions that affect them are being made.

Goals

- To facilitate and forge strong connections between youth in the community and the City of Guelph.
- To advocate City Council and other key decision-makers on behalf of the youth of Guelph.
- To enhance the lives and opportunities of all youth living in Guelph.
- To positively enhance the profile of youth in our city.
- To influence change through positive action.
- To respect and celebrate the diversity of the youth community in Guelph.
- To provide youth with leadership opportunities that will encourage personal growth.
- To think globally and take action on social issues that have a global and local impact. (social activism)

Meetings

Meetings will be held every Wednesday (holidays excluded) from 4:30 - 5:30 pm @ The Evergreen Seniors Centre (683 Woolwich St, Guelph) from late September until the end of June. Other meetings may be necessary throughout the year (depending on project development/workload). These meetings are held at the discretion of the Youth Services Coordinator, the Executive Committee, and the Project Leaders.

Members must be present, unless previously arranged with the Youth Services Coordinator, at all council functions, events, and weekly meetings. Extended absences from these meetings without prior communication with the Youth Services Coordinator may result in the removal of the individual from the council at the discretion of the Youth Services Coordinator.

Composition of Council

- Membership is limited to youth aged 13 - 18.
- Membership is limited to youth that is currently residing within or attending school in the city of Guelph.
- The council shall strive to create a representative and diverse group of young people.
- All new members must submit a completed [General Guelph Youth Council Member Volunteer Form and Photo Release](#) before becoming part of the Guelph Youth Council.
- An Executive Committee will help provide core leadership to the group. An application and selection process will determine the Executive Committee. Those not on the Executive Committee will be part of the General Membership of the GYC.

Governing Structure

The Guelph Youth Council is made up of primarily general members and project leads. The six Executive Committee members are responsible for the daily operation of the Guelph Youth Council, under the direction and supervision of the Youth Services Coordinator. The Guelph Youth Council is sponsored by the City of Guelph, therefore, the Youth Services Coordinator reserves the right to review and veto any decisions and actions that do not match the corporation's philosophy.

General Membership

Individuals who do not hold a position on the Executive Committee are considered part of the group's General Membership. The General Membership is an integral part of the Guelph Youth Council and requires enthusiasm, commitment, and dedication from everyone involved.

General members are expected to:

- Attend 1 hour weekly meetings and read any and all pre-distributed meeting materials
- Make an effort to be engaged and participate actively in GYC meetings.
- Contribute to a positive council environment where everyone, regardless of race, age, ability, economic state, gender, sexuality, feels welcome and valued.
- Vote on decisions that affect the Guelph Youth Council.
- Bring new ideas/initiatives to the group.
- Assist with the development and implementation of activities and events.
- Attend all activities, events, functions, presentations and meetings of the Guelph Youth Council.
- Act as a role model to other youth within the community.
- Actively recruit new members to the group.
- Take part in group discussions and attend meetings.

Note - Any individual seeking to join the Guelph Youth Council as a General Member is free to do so at any time. Recruitment for new General Members is open year-round. To apply, individuals can complete the Guelph Youth Council General Member Volunteer Form and Photo Release found on the youth.guelph.ca website. Or download a physical copy [here](#).

Action Groups / Project Leaders

Action Groups are an integral part of the Guelph Youth Council that form on an as-needed basis throughout the year when the council decides to take on a specific project (Youth Week, Speed River Clean-up, etc.). Once it is determined that an Action Group is necessary, a member of the General Membership will be selected as the Project Leader for that particular group.

The Project Leader will then assume the responsibility of leading the Action Group and will be responsible for the following:

- Keeping the Executive Committee and Youth Services Coordinator updated on the project status.
- Recruiting other members of the Guelph Youth Council to assist with project development.

- Creating a timeline and task list associated with the project.
- Establishing and meeting all deadlines associated with the successful implementation of the project.
- Scheduling additional Action Group meetings if they are needed, in conjunction with the Youth Services Coordinator.
- Conducting an informal evaluation of the project once it is complete.

Note - Executive Committee members cannot serve as Project Leaders, but are still responsible for joining and participating in Action Groups as they form. This approach provides other GYC members with an opportunity to develop their leadership skills and experience.

Executive Committee

The Executive Committee is responsible for providing youth-based leadership and direction to the GYC. The Executive Committee members assume all of the duties of the General Membership while also assuming additional leadership responsibilities. The Executive Committee works very closely with the Youth Services Coordinator. Executive Committee members should be responsible, organized, and enthusiastic. Due to the nature of the Executive positions, any individual interested in becoming part of the GYC Executive Committee must be prepared to invest additional hours as needed per week, as these positions require an elevated sense of commitment.

The Executive Committee is comprised of the following members:

- Chair
- Vice-Chair
- Director - Communications & Public Relations
- Director - Social Activism
- Director - Group Dynamics
- Secretary

Selection of the Executive Committee

- Applications for the Executive positions will be accepted annually until the end of September.
- The Youth Services Coordinator will decide on final Executive positions in October.
- Executive Committee positions are open to anyone (13 - 18 years of age), even if you are a new member of the GYC, have applied in previous years, or are a previous Executive Committee member. To apply, individuals are responsible for completing an Executive Committee Position Application Form
- Individuals may apply for more than one position by indicating the desired position(s) on their Executive Application Form.
- If a large number of applicants seek a position on the GYC Executive Committee, the candidates may be asked to address the group at one of the weekly meetings, explaining their rationale for pursuing an Executive position.

- Once the youth services coordinator receives all the applications, they will review the applications based on pre-decided selection criteria and announce the accepted members of the Executive Committee by email.
- If any positions remain vacant, the Youth Services Coordinator will assume the responsibilities of that position until it is filled.
- Once elected, the Executive Committee will oversee the group's actions for the current session (October - June). In June of each year, the Executive Committee will dissolve, and a new Executive Committee will be elected for the following session.

General Executive Position Responsibilities

All members of the Executive Committee must fulfill these responsibilities in addition to their role-specific duties and responsibilities:

- Remain approachable, friendly, and compassionate to all members of the group.
- Represent the GYC at any social function, meeting, or event deemed relevant to the group.
- Attend additional Executive Committee Meetings as needed
- Encourage consensus-decision making, wherever possible.
- Ensure that everyone has a chance to be heard and remains positive, friendly, and fair at all times.

Executive Position Descriptions:

Chair

The Chair works to ensure that the GYC is upholding its mandate, values, and goals. The Chair will ensure that all decisions made by the group have been reviewed and approved by the Youth Services Coordinator.

Specifically, the Chair shall:

- Facilitate the weekly GYC meeting and create meeting agendas (with the Youth Services Coordinator).
- Set the tone of the meetings, lead by example, and encourage team-building.
- Ensure that the democratic process is upheld (decisions are brought to a vote).
- Keep the Youth Services Coordinator apprised of the council's actions at all times by working collaboratively with the Youth Services Coordinator on all GYC matters.
- Continually monitor the group to ensure that it is functioning as a cooperative and cohesive team.
- Function as a catalyst in group discussions, encouraging all members to share their ideas.
- Organize, develop, and participate in all GYC community presentations (City Council updates, etc.).

Vice-Chair

The *Vice-Chair* acts as Chair (and assumes all of their associated responsibilities) whenever the Chair cannot fulfill their duties. They are also responsible for providing direct assistance to the Chair to ensure that the GYC operates effectively and efficiently.

Specifically, the Vice-Chair shall:

- Assist the GYC Directors and Project Leaders with their assigned tasks and responsibilities.
- Ensuring that GYC stays within budget parameters, as determined by the Youth Services Coordinator.
- Ensure that the GYC is represented on community groups or committees where youth input is needed.

Director - Social Activism

The *Director - Social Activism* is responsible for exploring and coordinating social advocacy/awareness opportunities that may interest the Guelph Youth Council (Amnesty International campaigns, youth shelters/homeless youth, Speed River Clean-up, etc.). These opportunities must reflect the mandate, values, and goals of the group.

Specifically, the Director-Social Activism shall:

- Bring any social advocacy/awareness opportunities to the Guelph Youth Council's attention
- Stay up-to-date with events and programs running in the community

Secretary

The Secretary is responsible for working closely with the Youth Services Coordinator on administrative and organizational work. The Secretary is responsible for all internal communications within the GYC. In addition to the general executive committee roles, the Secretary must be an organized, engaged, reliable individual.

Specifically, the Secretary shall:

- Mark down attendance at each general and executive meeting
- Take meeting minutes at the weekly meetings and send them to the rest of the group (within three days of a meeting)
- Distribute meeting details and event reminders to the group.
- Provide all new members with the correct forms and information sheets (general member volunteer form and photo release, new-member information sheet etc.)
- In collaboration with the youth services coordinator, provide guidance and support to project leads on taking minutes, running a group meeting, etc.
- Be responsible for adding new members to the email list and any and all other communication platforms used by the GYC.

Director - Communications & Public Relations

The Director - Communications & Public Relations is responsible for all external communications that pertain to the GYC.

Specifically, the Director- Communications & Public Relations duties include:

- Overseeing the creation of all media pieces relating to the GYC. (Note - This does not mean that they are necessarily responsible for creating all of the documents (flyers, posters, etc.). It simply means that they are responsible for ensuring that all posters are made in a timely fashion).
- Assisting the Youth Services Coordinator with the function of the GYC's Social media pages by posting regularly and promoting GYC affiliated events and programs.
- Exploring potential GYC promotional opportunities within the community.
- Coordinating the development of all GYC media/press releases in collaboration with the GYC Chair and the Youth Services Coordinator.
- Establishing (and maintaining) contact with the various High School Student Councils to expand our communication network.
- Assisting the Chair with the development of all GYC community presentations (City Council, etc.).
- Forwarding **all** media pieces (posters, flyers, press releases, etc.) to the Youth Services Coordinator for branding and approval **before** the documents go public.

Director - Group Dynamics

The *Director - Group Dynamics* is responsible for monitoring and enhancing the overall team dynamics of the GYC.

Specifically, the Director- Group Dynamics duties include:

Searching for potential team-building and leadership initiatives that could benefit the group.

- Organizing social activities for the GYC. These activities could include - holiday parties, pot-luck dinners, going to the movies, mini-golf, etc. These activities will allow for team-building and group bonding and help create positive relationships between all GYC members.
- Detecting any non-productive conflict or negative-group sentiment within the GYC and bringing the conflict to the attention of the Youth Services Coordinator.
- Working with the Youth Services Coordinator to solve the conflict and develop steps forward to prevent the conflict from recurring.

Youth Services Coordinator

The Youth Services Coordinator is a full-time employee of the City of Guelph and will maintain the corporation's values while also assisting the Guelph Youth Council in fulfilling its mandate, upholding its values, and achieving its goals.

Specifically, the Youth Services Coordinator shall:

- Schedule meetings, supply all members with a calendar of meeting dates/times.
- Work with the GYC Chair to create an agenda for each meeting.

- Assist with the development of timelines, task lists, and other aspects of project management.
- Track and support council member's involvement.
- Monitor all financial matters for the council.
- Review and approve **all** decisions made by the GYC.
- Perform day-to-day operational tasks on behalf of the GYC.
- Recruit new members, and provide appropriate training and orientation.
- Facilitate the development of partnerships and collaborations with key stakeholders.
- Provide regular GYC updates to City of Guelph staff.
- Function as GYC chaperone at all council-related events, activities, and training opportunities.
- Resolve any internal conflict between members by employing effective conflict resolution techniques.
- Preserve the integrity of the GYC brand within the community.
- Oversee the online presence of the GYC (Facebook Group, Website, etc.).
- Maintain an up-to-date listing of all GYC members, including relevant contact info.

Removal of Members

Suppose a member of the Executive Committee is failing to perform their duties. In that case, the Youth Services Coordinator and the individual will meet to discuss the problem and establish steps to resolve the issue. These steps could involve the individual resigning from the position or developing an action plan to correct the issues. If it is determined that an individual will be leaving from their position, an additional selection will be held to fill the vacancy.

All members of the GYC are expected to commit to their position and attend all meetings. Youth council members should communicate with the Youth Services Coordinator before any and all the meetings they will be absent for. If a member misses a large number of meetings, events, or functions (without notifying the Youth Services Coordinator in advance of their absence) during a session, they will be given a warning, then, if the attendance issue is not resolved, will be removed from the council at the discretion of the Youth Services Coordinator.

Voting

The GYC will utilize a voting system to arrive at group decisions. Before the group begins a new initiative, activity, or undertaking of any kind, the item must be brought in front of the group (at a weekly GYC meeting) to be subject to a group vote. To be accepted, the item must receive a majority (greater than 50%) of the votes (Note - only individuals in attendance at the meeting are eligible to vote on meeting items). Adopting this democratic process ensures that every member of the group has a role in GYC decision-making.

Note - the Youth Services Coordinator must be present during all group voting.

Grievances

Suppose a member of the GYC has a problem with any aspect of the group (members, team cooperation, peer conflict, etc.). In that case, they are encouraged to approach the Youth Services Coordinator and/or the Director - Group Dynamics with their concern(s). From there, the Youth

Services Coordinator will record the complaint and determine if further action needs to be taken to rectify the problem. The identity of any individual filing a complaint with the Youth Services Coordinator will always be kept strictly confidential.

Collaboration Limitations

As the Guelph Youth Council actively seeks to build new relationships and partnerships within the community, the following statement will guide all GYC collaborations.

The Guelph Youth Council will **not** consider or enter into any partnership, sponsorship, or strategic alliance that:

- *Requires endorsement of a specific product or brand.*
- *Is based entirely on contingent success.*
- *Requires the Guelph Youth Council members or partners to purchase products to participate.*
- *The partner's main business focus or activities appear (or could be taken to appear) in contradiction or conflict with the goals, mandate, or values of the Guelph Youth Council.*



For more information about the Guelph Youth Council, past projects and events, GYC meetings and application information:

Visit: <https://youth.guelph.ca>

Or

Contact The Youth Services Coordinator at youth.council@guelph.ca